

SOG NOTES for 5.28.2010 call

Call re: Check-in on the Stanislaus Gravel Augmentation Plan

Attendees: Liz Vasquez, John Hannon, Rachel Barnett-Johnson (USBR), J.D. Wikert (FWS), Rhonda Reed, Barb Byrne (NMFS)

Section updates:

- J.D. wrote up project descriptions for the Honolulu Bar and Lover's Leap projects.
- Dan sent the group a draft of a monitoring overview.
- John has provided a section about the CVPIA b13 program to provide a bit of history and context for gravel augmentation on the Stanislaus and elsewhere in the Central Valley.
- Rachel has written up a background & rationale section using some of the language from the NMFS Opinion.

Monitoring Discussion:

(hit this topic several times during call, am combining notes into a single section for simplicity)

Dan's monitoring table nicely lays out the various types of monitoring that *could* be done to track the responses to gravel augmentation, with classification by importance, frequency, and cost. Further discussion is needed to identify the specific monitoring components that will be proposed in this year's gravel plan. The monitoring plan will include monitoring of both physical and biological responses.

It was noted that some of the monitoring in Dan's table is already underway. For example, DFG does cursory redd surveys during their escapement surveys and Tri-Dam has contracted with Fishbio to do redd surveys and snorkel surveys. Rachel will look into adding a column to Dan's table noting whether or not any monitoring is currently in place, and if so, who is conducting it, where.

There was some discussion about opportunities to find monitoring partners in university research programs (e.g. Sacramento State conducts monitoring on the American River), consulting firms, nonprofit organizations, and state and federal agencies.

Liz noted that CCAO does bi-weekly redd surveys on the American, so the expertise is there to potentially step in *on a temporary basis* on the Stanislaus. Also Reclamation funds an escapement survey each year as a requirement of the 1987 Agreement. Modification of that work to provide the biological monitoring needed might be a cost effective option for gravel monitoring. In addition, DFG currently notes redds during the current escapement work though that monitoring is down as a sideline to the actual carcass count. A more focused effort may be preferred to analysis the impact of specific gravel augmentation projects.

Funding:

Reclamation has funding for the Honolulu Bar project. The 2011 b13 budget can fund the placement of approximately 4000 cubic yards of gravel on the Stanislaus.

Siting of gravel placement:

Rachel, John, and J.D. will be making site visits to some potential placement locations. All are welcome to join; no date is set yet.

Likely-to-occur projects:

There are 4-5 “likely to occur” projects that can contribute to the goal of 50,000 cubic yards of gravel by 2014. One of those projects is the placement of gravel in Goodwin Canyon – this project could likely be implemented as early as 2011 (with the potential for additional gravel to be placed 2012-2014).

The “Clear Creek” approach that would be used in Goodwin Canyon (dumping gravel in the river for natural redistribution) is very cost-effective and can have high (if somewhat deferred) benefits.

The “Zen Garden” approach of creating desired features directly provides immediate benefits yet is more costly.

It was suggested that a combination of berm and riffle restoration downstream (more costly, but more immediate benefits) and placement of gravel in Goodwin Canyon for natural redistribution (less costly, but less immediate effects) provided a good balance of costs and benefits in both the near and long-term.

Community outreach:

It was suggested that the agencies do some outreach to the communities along the Stanislaus regarding the plans for gravel augmentation (and other restoration projects). Suggested venues included:

- Stanislaus Salmon Festival
- community meetings
- newspapers

Next steps:

Dan’s monitoring piece needs to be integrated into the plan. The plan will then go to Liz V. for review before distribution to the full SOG group.

From 5/14/2010 call notes

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION OF PLAN

~~MAY 28th – 2pm check in call. Liz or Barb will send out call number.~~

JUNE 9th -- Section drafts due to Liz for compilation

JUNE 16th -- Full plan draft handed out at the June 16th SOG meeting

JUNE 23rd – comments from SOG members due to Liz V.

JUNE 30th – Final plan submitted to NMFS (and shared with SOG)